Project Proposal

Proposal Title: **Woodruff Longhill Sagebrush Improvement** **Proposal Number:** 1477

DWR Region: Northern Region **Lead Agency:** BLM **County:** Rich

Project Manager: Brad Jessop **PM Phone:** 0 **Regional Priority:** Within Focus Area

Project Type: Terrestrial Habitat **Proposed Start Date:** 7/1/2009

Project Location: 10 miles west of the town of Woodruff, Rich County, Utah.

Project Description: sage thinning and juniper removal, seeding

Description of Problem/Need: Sagebrush habitat condition in Woodruff Longhill is declining. In some sagebrush stands, sagebrush is becoming decadent and unproductive. In others, sagebrush is still relatively healthy but is becoming too dense thus increasing the potential for large stand replacing wildland fires. In both situations, native understory plants are either scarce or non-existent due to overgrowth of sagebrush or competition from introduced grass species. Furthermore, juniper regrowth from past chaining activities will inevitably contribute to excessive fuel loading and further sagebrush community degradation. In order to reduce fuel loading and improve the health of sagebrush communities the Salt Lake Field Office of the BLM proposes a hazardous fuels reduction treatment that would thin sagebrush, restore native understory diversity, and remove invasive juniper.

Objectives: 1. Improve Fire Regime Condition Class and reduce fuel loading by removing 90-95% of juniper saplings;
2. Reduce sagebrush canopy cover to 15-20% within the area treated with Spike .
3. Introduce age-and-size-class diversity in sagebrush stands;
4. Improve the abundance and diversity of herbaceous vegetation on a small scale through crested wheatgrass reduction and seeding perennial species;
5. Enhance sage-grouse and mule deer habitat as well as leave some juniper trees in the open for nesting by sensitive raptor species;
6. Create firebreaks along existing roadways to reduce the potential for large wildland fires and improve road access for firefighters in the event of a wildfire.

Thinning dense sagebrush may promote an increase in understory production and decrease fuel loads. Restoring native understory diversity would improve wildlife habitat and ecosystem function. Removing young juniper preserves the integrity of the sagebrush community while also preventing fuel buildup. Mowing sagebrush along roadways will help confine wildfires and improve access to firefighters in the event of a wildfire.

Relevance to Strategic Plans: This project will improve the functioning of currently impaired ecosystems (Goal B: Conserve, protect, enhance, and manage Utah's ecosystems, of the DWR Strategic Plan, Objectives B-1 and B-2). Projects of this nature are identified in the BLM's Woodruff Pastures Allotment Management Plan, Randolph Management Framework Plan (1980) as amended by the SLFO Fire Management Plan (FMP) (1998) Alternative 2-Proposed Action/Integrated Fire/Resource Management Plan page seven in order to improve the condition of the rangeland. The objectives in the Woodruff Creek Fire Management Unit of the FMP are to utilize fuels treatments to reduce fire severity and occurrence and reduce hazardous fuel accumulation in areas that will reduce the threat of large uncontrolled wildland fires, create mosaics to increase edge effect, and improve wildlife and plant diversity (BLM-Salt Lake Field Office, Fire Management Plan, September 2004). The Woodruff Longhill EA (UT-020-2008-035) specifies the need and authorization for treatments in this area. This project will address the needs of conservation of the Tier II and Tier III species noted in the WAP indentified in section 5.1, and also address the need for protection and restoration of the habitat types listed in section 7.1 of the WAP. This project would also address the WMA maintenance plan and the Sage Grouse Management plan for Rich County CRM, as well as the BLM RMP for Rich County.

Potential Risks: seeding failure

Proposed Methods: Use chainsaws to slash (lop and drop) juniper saplings on 3000 acres of BLM land. The slashing will require that live juniper within the treatment polygon be cut. The bole and any branches will be completely severed from the stump and heights shall be no greater than 6" measured on the uphill side. Once cut the tree will be left as is on site unless the slash depth is greater than 24" above ground level. Any slash greater than 24" will need to be bucked into smaller pieces and scattered to meet the depth requirement.

To reduce sagebrush cover, Spike (Tebuthiuron) will be applied aerially in mosaic patterns on up to 1000 acres.

Disking would occur to reduce crested wheatgrass during the spring, prior to seed set. The surviving crested wheatgrass and newly germinated seedlings that sprout from the seed bank would then be treated with Round-up the following spring. Treated areas would be planted with a diverse seed mixture using a rangeland drill during the fall of the same year.

Mow along existing roadways (40'on each side X approximately 6 miles = approximately 100 acres).

Shapefile Name: HPD 2010\GIS Proposed\NR\1477… **Seed Source:** GBRC

UPCD Reg Team Coord Date: 12/2/2008

Project Proposal

Proposed NEPA Action:

Proposed Arch Action:

☑ **Vegetation Monitoring** ☑ **Wildlife Monitoring**

Monitoring Information: Because juniper saplings are widely scattered across the treatment area, multiple photo points will be used to assess the effectiveness of the juniper removal treatments. Photos will be taken prior to and soon after slashing.

Line point intercept transects will be established and read to monitor the effects of the Spike treatment and the crested wheatgrass diversification seeding trial. Data collected will provide vegetation cover, composition and structure. Quadrats will be used to assess density of seeded species in the crested wheatgrass seeding trial plots. Photo points will also be established in association with the line-point intersect transects. All data, including photos, will be collected prior to treatment and for up to five years post treatment.

Grazing Management: Rangeland Health data was collected during 2003 on the Woodruff Pastures Allotment. Preliminary analysis of the data collected in the analysis area identifies that the majority of the allotment is in a mid to late seral state. The slashing treatment would improve the demand for forage among livestock and wildlife and would move the area towards the attainment of rangeland health standards (43 CFR 4100-0-2).

SPECIES BENEFITING

Greater Sage-grouse | Mule Deer | Raptors

LAND OWNERSHIP

Owner		Acres
BLM		3185
	Total	3185

PROPOSED FUNDING

Source		Amount Requested	Date Approved	Amount Approved
Unfunded Balance		$17,950.00		$0.00
BLM		$75,200.00		$0.00
BLM ARRA		$35,000.00	3/12/2009	$35,000.00
	Totals	***$128,150.00***		***$35,000.00***

PROPOSED BUDGET

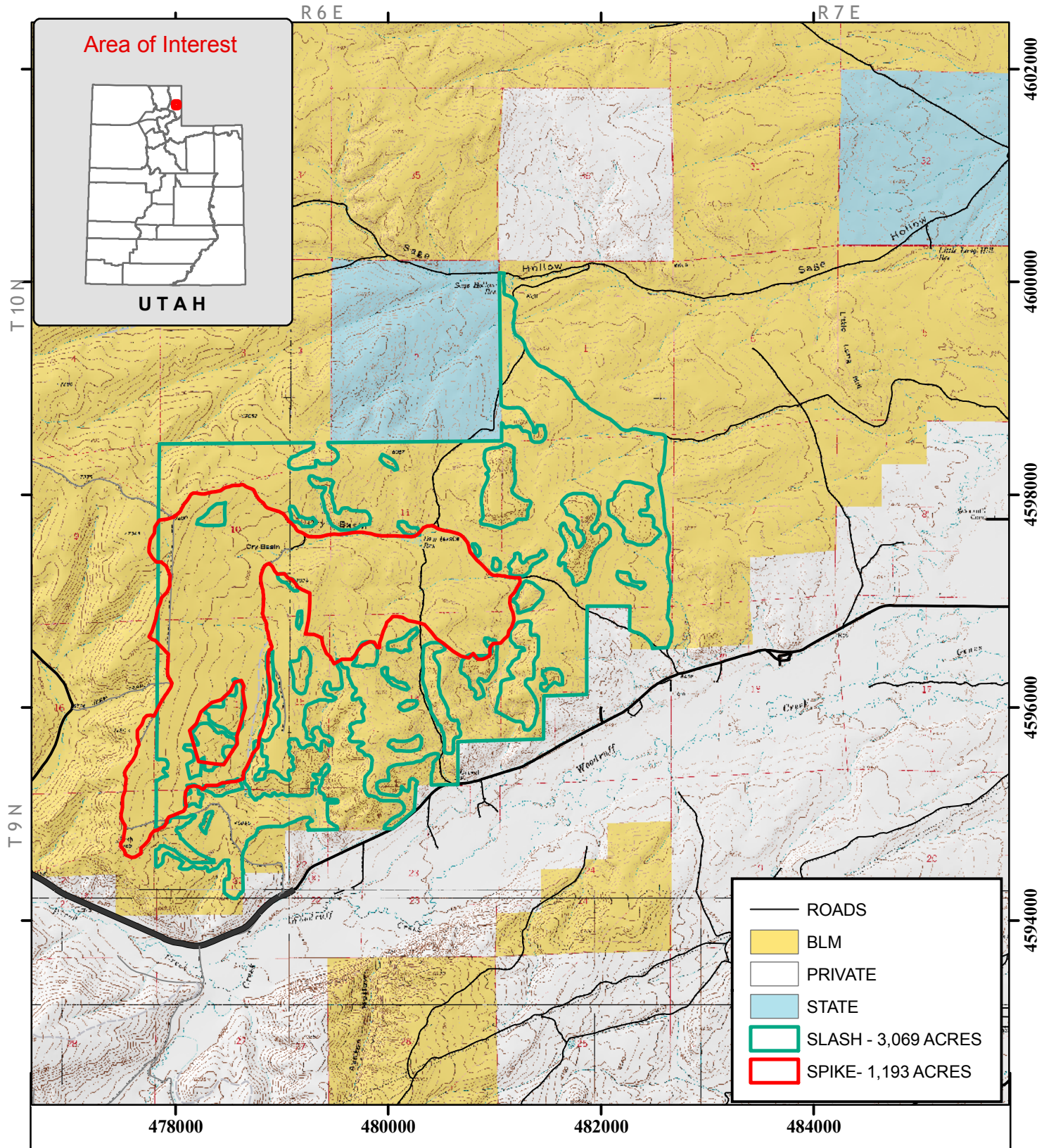
Item	Description	DWR Account	Partner Contrib.
NEPA		$0.00	$5,000.00
Personal Services	Project layout and design	$0.00	$1,500.00
Personal Services	Seasonal personnel time (6 days)	$0.00	$900.00
Motor Pool	BLM truck for seasonal	$0.00	$800.00
Contractual Services	slashing contract BLM IDIQ	$0.00	$50,000.00
Contractual Services	10 acre cattle exclosure	$0.00	$8,000.00
Equipment Rental	tractor	$0.00	$3,000.00
Equipment transport		$0.00	$2,000.00
Personal Services	mowing along roadways	$0.00	$4,000.00
Contractual Services	Tebuthiron application	$25,000.00	$0.00

Project Proposal

Contractual Services	shared cost slashing		$25,000.00	$0.00
Seed (GBRC)	seed for 10 acres		$600.00	$0.00
Materials and Supplies	roundup		$350.00	$0.00
Equipment transport			$2,000.00	$0.00
		Totals	***$52,950.00***	***$75,200.00***

Project Map:

WOODRUFF LONGHILL



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

N

0 0.6 1.2 Miles

1:50,000

Contour Interval 40' UTM Nad83 Zone 12

Bureau of Land Management
Salt Lake Field Office
February 25, 2009

This product may not meet BLM standards for accuracy and content. Different data sources and input scales may cause misalignment of data layers. Transportation network has not been verified.

P:\FIRE\FUELS_WUI Project Library\Projects\Woodruff Longhill RA79\Maps\Woodruff_Longhill_RA79_AA_SL_SPIKE.pdf